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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/068,033	02/06/2002	Brian John Cragun	ROC920010190US1	7230

7590 02/02/2007	EXAMINER
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IBM Corporation - Dept. 917	

3605 Highway 52 North	ART UNIT · PAPER NUMBER
Rochester, MN 55901	3623

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	02/02/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

	Application No.	Applicant(s)
Office Action Summary	10/068,033	CRAGUN ET AL.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**	
	Jonathan G. Sterrett	3623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE <u>3</u> MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.
- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on <u>02 November 2006</u>.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**.   2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) <u>1-41</u> is/are pending in the application.

    4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) <u>1-41</u> is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

    a)☐ All   b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

      1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

      2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

      3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.

5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application

6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1.   The following is a Non-Final office action in response to the amendments filed by

the applicant on November 2, 2006. Claims 1-41 are pending.

Response to Arguments

2.   The Examiner has fully considered the applicant's arguments and they are not

persuasive.

3.   On page 21 para 3, the applicant argues with respect to independent claims 1,

41 and 30 that there is no motivation to combine the references.

        The examiner respectfully disagrees.

        In response to applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the

references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by

combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention

where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the

references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in

the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re*

Jones, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, both Conmy and

Outlook 97 address scheduling meetings. Outlook 97 teaches (page 117 para 6) that its

approach in using delegate and resource information makes it easier to book a meeting.

One of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that meetings are complex and may

require additional information beyond just scheduling attendees and setting a time.

There can be delegates and resources involved which are more difficult to plan for. Outlook 97 makes it easy for someone to handle setting up meetings when these additional elements must be included. Thus one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have modified the teachings of Comny to include utilizing the advanced capabilities of Outlook 97 with a reasonable expectation of success that Outlook 97 would have increased the ease of setting up meetings that require additional delegate and resource elements.

4.   The applicant argues that Conmy and Outlook 97 regarding Claims 1, 30 and 41 (pages 23-26) do not meet the limitations of the preamble and do not perform as cited of "scheduling using delegates, representatives, quorums and teams" performed by a scheduling program.

The examiner respectfully disagrees.

In response to applicant's arguments, the recitation "using delegates, representatives, quorums and teams performed by an electronic calendar" has not been given patentable weight because the recitation occurs in the preamble. A preamble is generally not accorded any patentable weight where it merely recites the purpose of a process or the intended use of a structure, and where the body of the claim does not depend on the preamble for completeness but, instead, the process steps or structural limitations are able to stand alone. See In re Hirao, 535 F.2d 67, 190 USPQ 15 (CCPA 1976) and Kropa v. Robie, 187 F.2d 150, 152, 88 USPQ 478, 481 (CCPA 1951).

Additionally, as is noted below, the different types of meeting information "delegates, representatives, quorums and teams" is not connected to positive recitations in the claim that distinguish how this information is used. As it is currently recited, it is just data. (For example, a quorum is generally understood as a minimum number of people to decide on something in a meeting. A delegate is someone who represents someone or something else – it is unclear how the claims are using these different types of data to schedule a meeting.) As it is claimed, the limitation of "using" does not distinguish these types of data from other types of data.

The examiner further notes that for claim 1, the terms "delegates, representatives, quorums and teams" are nonfunctional descriptive material. The claim cites this data being stored and used, but it does not further set out, for example, how "delegates" data is used differently than "quorum" data in setting up a meeting. Thus, the storing and use of data by the claim is not further patentably distinguished by the type of data that is used and stored. For example, if the claim cited storing "medical patient and doctor information and surgery procedure information" and then using this information to set up a meeting, then we might infer that somehow the doctor is performing surgery on the patient, but if the claim does not positively recite how the information regarding these types of information (i.e. the doctor, patient and procedure information) is used, then the type of data is not given weight, since the cited references at least teach data being stored and used in setting up a meeting.

The recited method steps would be performed the same regardless of the specific data. Further, the structural elements remain the same regardless of the

specific data. Thus, this descriptive material will not distinguish the claimed invention

from the prior art in terms of patentability, *see In re Gulack, 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217*

USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); In re Lowry, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed.

Cir. 1994); MPEP ə 2106.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5.   The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set
> forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and
> the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the
> invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains.
> Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

6.   Claims 1-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Comny et al (US 6,101480) in view of "Microsoft Outlook 97 Administrator's Guide",

Microsoft Corporation, 1997; hereinafter referred to as "Outlook 97".

As per claims 1 and 30, Conmy teaches storing meeting settings and invitees

data for a meeting (See Figure 6 where the invitees and the meeting settings are listed.

See also column 3, lines 29-37.); meeting settings and invitee data includes an invitee

attendance type (column 6, lines 60-67 where a required or optional attendee would

constitute an attendance type); identifying a solution time block for automated meeting

scheduling including at least a subset of a plurality of selected invitees utilizing said

stored invitee attendance type and other stored meeting data (column 6, lines 35: (108)

best fit, where the best time is chosen based upon invitee availability). Comny does not

explicitly teach the attendee categories of delegates, representatives, quorums and

team data. Outlook 97 teaches that it is known to have delegates and team data (page 117 where the workgroup member category represents the team data category and the use of delegates is taught.). Outlook is an analogous art as it also teaches about scheduling meetings.

Outlook teaches that this approach provides for one computer to handle multiple resources (page 117 para 6) to make the booking of several conference rooms easier.

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the scheduling system of Comny with the delegate and team data categories of Outlook 97 because it would make it easier to book delegates and resources for setting up a meeting.

The examiner notes that for claim 1, the terms "delegates, representatives, quorums and teams" are nonfunctional descriptive material. The claim cites this data being stored and used, but it does not further set out, for example, how "delegates" data is used differently than "quorum" data in setting up a meeting. Thus, the storing and use of data by the claim is not further patentably distinguished by the type of data that is used and stored. For example, if the claim cited storing "medical patient and doctor information and surgery procedure information" and then using this information to set up a meeting, then we might infer that somehow the doctor is performing surgery on the patient, but if the claim does not positively recite how the information regarding these types of information (i.e. the doctor, patient and procedure information) is used, then the

type of data is not given weight, since the cited references at least teach data being

stored and used in setting up a meeting.

Official notice is taken that it is old and well known to use representatives at

meetings to provide means for efficiently conveying information to a group of people,

whereby it is not efficient for every member of every group to attend every meeting,

therefore a representative is assigned to attend and report back on the information

obtained to the group. This is supported by articles such as: page 1014 of "Eliciting

public values for complex policy decisions" by Keeney et al., Management Science,

September 1990. Official notice is also taken that it is old and well known for meetings

to have quorums to insure that enough members are present at the meeting for

potential decision making or other meeting matters. This assertion is supported by

articles such as: page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed

meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. Therefore it would have been

obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the

attendee data of Comny with the additional representative and quorum categories to

provide means for further defining the meeting and ensuring accuracy of the appropriate

people and number of people being present for the meeting.

As per claims 2 and 31, Conmy teaches identifying said solution time block for

automated meeting scheduling including at least said subset of a plurality of selected

invitees includes the steps of identifying said subset of said plurality of selected invitees

including at least one of an identified minimum number of said plurality of selected

invitees (column 6, lines 35: (108) best fit, where the best time is chosen based upon invitee availability); a substitute for one or more of said plurality of selected invitees (column 9, line 28, where a delegate can be indicated which is equivalent to a substitute.). Conmy does not explicitly teach a quorum for a meeting scheduled. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known that a minimum or quorum of attendees is required as indicated on page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. In order for a meeting to take place a minimum of two people would be required. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate a minimum or quorum number of invitees to have a meeting to provide a method for determining whether a meeting could be realized.

As per claims 3 and 32, Conmy teaches the steps of storing a required time period for said meeting, an earliest meeting date; a latest meeting date (column 2, lines 19-33, where the system finds the best fit time and other options based upon the weighting of the invitees and their availability. Therefore, an early and a late time would be indicated.); and said selected invitees to said meeting (column 2, lines 34-51, where the system contains the profiles of the invitees and utilizes this information to plan a meeting.).

As per claim 4, Conmy teaches calculating a selection score for each potential time block for automated meeting scheduling utilizing said stored meeting settings and invitees data including said invitee attendance type (column 6, lines 34-54, where the system weights, which requires a scoring system, the invitees and resources for the

meeting and provides a best fit option as well as other potential options. See also fit determination unit (308)).

However, Conmy does not teach delegates, representatives, quorums and teams data as previously discussed above in claim 1. Outlook 97 teaches that it is known to have delegates and team data (page 117 where the workgroup member category represents the team data category and the use of delegates is taught.). Outlook is an analogous art as it also teaches about scheduling meetings. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the scheduling system of Comny with the delegate and team data categories of Outlook 97 to provide means for further defining the meeting and ensuring accuracy of the appropriate people present at the meeting.

Official notice is taken that it is old and well known to use representatives at meetings to provide means for efficiently conveying information to a group of people, whereby it is not efficient for every member of every group to attend every meeting, therefore a representative is assigned to attend and report back on the information obtained to the group. This is supported by articles such as: page 1014 of "Eliciting public values for complex policy decisions" by Keeney et al., Management Science, September 1990. Official notice is also taken that it is old and well known for meetings to have quorums to insure that enough members are present at the meeting for potential decision making or other meeting matters. This assertion is supported by articles such as: page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. Therefore it would have been

obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the

attendee data of Comny with the additional representative and quorum categories to

provide means for further defining the meeting and ensuring accuracy of the appropriate

people and number of people being present for the meeting.

As per claim 5, Conmy teaches sorting said potential time blocks for automated

meeting scheduling by highest calculated selection scores (column 6, lines 34-45,

where the best fit option is produced which would produce the highest score.).

As per claims 6 and 33, Conmy teaches the steps of identifying said solution

block for automated meeting scheduling including at least said subset of said plurality of

selected invitees utilizing said calculated selection score for each potential time block

(column 6, lines 34-54, where the system weights, which requires a scoring of sorts, the

invitees and resources for the meeting and provides a best fit option as well as other

potential options. See also fit determination unit (308)).

As per claim 7, Conmy teaches the step of calculating said selection score for

each potential time block for automated meeting scheduling includes the steps of

identifying a potential time block marked as unusable and setting said selection score to

unusable (See busytime creation unit (304) and column 4, lines 56-67, where the

busytime unit determines the times that each invitee is busy or the times that are

unusable for that person since they are busy.).

As per claims 8, 10, 16, 34 and 36-40, Conmy teaches the step of calculating

said selection score for each potential time block for automated meeting scheduling

includes the steps of increasing said selection score for each available member (See

column 6, lines 38-45, where weights are assigned based upon the importance or required feature of an invitee. The room and the chairman will receive a higher weighting since they are required. Additional invitees can be indicated as required and given a higher rating, this would be equivalent to scoring a quorum member higher as it performs an identical function in substantially the same manner with substantially the same results. All required members would be indicated by their score value.). Comny does not explicitly teach a quorum or checking for a quorum of available quorum members, as previously discussed in claim 1. Official notice is also taken that it is old and well known for meetings to have quorums to insure that enough members are present at the meeting for potential decision making or other meeting matters. This assertion is supported by articles such as: page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the attendee data of Comny with the additional representative and quorum categories to provide means for further defining the meeting and ensuring accuracy of the appropriate people and number of people being present for the meeting.

As per claims 9, 17 and 35, Conmy teaches responsive to identifying less than said quorum of available members, of setting said selection score to unusable (column 6, lines 46-54, where the unavailability weighting is used to score the unavailability of an invitee and their relative importance to the meeting. The factors are additive with the higher value indicating the less available the time slot. See also column 7, lines 18-33, where the system reduces the number if invitees by removing the invitee with the lowest

weighting and re-checking the time slot with these invitees until a list is found that can fit

the time interval. This is presented to the coordinator as an alternative to the best fit

option. If the members that are required for the meeting are not included in the invitee

list as the end of this reduction process, the meeting will not be able to be held.

Therefore there is a required minimum of invitees needed for the meeting which is

equivalent to a quorum as it performs an identical function in substantially the same

manner with substantially the same results.). Comny does not explicitly teach quorum

members as previously discussed in claim 1. Official notice is also taken that it is old

and well known for meetings to have quorums to insure that enough members are

present at the meeting for potential decision making or other meeting matters. This

assertion is supported by articles such as: page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision

mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997.

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

invention to modify the attendee data of Comny with the additional representative and

quorum categories to provide means for further defining the meeting and ensuring

accuracy of the appropriate people and number of people being present for the meeting.

As per claim 11, Conmy teaches responsive to identifying said required attendee

is not available (column 4, lines 54-55, where the availability time for each invitee is

retrieved from the database), of checking for each available member for identifying an

available member (column 9, lines 23-34, where a delegate may be indicated). Conmy

does not explicitly teach a delegate as previously discussed in claim 1. Outlook 97

teaches that it is known to have delegates (page 117 where the use of delegates is

taught.). Outlook is an analogous art as it also teaches about scheduling meetings.

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

invention to modify the scheduling system of Comny with the delegate feature of

Outlook 97 to provide means for ensuring accurate representation of members at the

meeting.

As per claim 12, Conmy teaches responsive to not identifying an available

member, of setting said selection score to unusable (column 9, lines 23-34. One option

is to indicate a member. Another is to decline or re-schedule. If an invitee declines they

are unable to make the meeting their score would be low and according to column 7,

lines 18-33, the lowest score is dropped from the invitee list which is equivalent to it

being unusable.). Conmy does not explicitly teach a delegate as previously discussed in

claim 1. Outlook 97 teaches that it is known to have delegates (page 117 where the

use of delegates is taught.). Outlook is an analogous art as it also teaches about

scheduling meetings. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in

the art at the time of the invention to modify the scheduling system of Comny with the

delegate feature of Outlook 97 to provide means for ensuring accurate representation of

members at the meeting.

As per claims 13-14, Conmy teaches responsive to identifying a member (column

9, lines 23-34, where a delegate may be indicated), checking for requires consultation

(the delegated person is now one of the invitees and needs to respond to the invite the

same as the invitee as indicated in column 12, lines 2-4), and responsive to not

identifying requires consultation, increasing said selection score by an identified

member value (See column 6, lines 38-45, where weights are assigned based upon the importance or required feature of an invitee. The room and the chairman will receive a higher weighting since they are required. Additional invitees can be indicated as required and given a higher rating.); and storing said identified available member (column 11, lines 47-51, where the user can delegate the assignment and it's part of the Notes Mail system which includes a database for maintaining all the information.). Conmy does not explicitly teach a delegate as previously discussed in claim 1. Outlook 97 teaches that it is known to have delegates (page 117 where the use of delegates is taught.). Outlook is an analogous art as it also teaches about scheduling meetings. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the scheduling system of Comny with the delegate feature of Outlook 97 to provide means for ensuring accurate representation of members at the meeting.

As per claim 15, Conmy teaches calculating said selection score for each potential time block for automated meeting scheduling includes the steps increasing said selection score for each available team member (See column 6, lines 38-45, where weights are assigned based upon the importance or required feature of an invitee. The room and the chairman will receive a higher weighting since they are required. Additional invitees can be indicated as required and given a higher rating, this would be equivalent to scoring a team member higher as it performs an identical function in substantially the same manner with substantially the same results); and storing a list of

available team members (column 2, lines 38-39 where a database keeps all the profile

information of the invitees, which includes the team members.).

As per claim 18, Conmy teaches checking for each individual consultant whether

said individual consultant is available for consultation (column 6, lines 35: (108) best fit,

where the best time is chosen based upon invitee availability, where the invitee can be

a consultant.). Conmy does not explicitly teach responsive to identifying said threshold

number of available team members. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known

that a minimum or threshold or quorum of attendees is required. In order for a meeting

to take place a minimum of two people would be required as indicated on page 275 of

"Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling system" by

Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in

the art at the time of the invention to incorporate a minimum or quorum number of

invitees to have a meeting to provide a method for determining whether a meeting could

be realized.

As per claim 19, Conmy teaches responsive to identifying said individual

consultant is not available for consultation, of setting said selection score to unusable

(column 4, lines 54-55, where the availability time for each invitee is retrieved from the

database and see busytime creation unit (304) and column 4, lines 56-67, where the

busytime unit determines the times that each invitee is busy or the times that are

unusable for that person since they are busy).

As per claim 20, Conmy teaches increasing said selection score for each team

member consulting (See column 6, lines 38-45, where weights are assigned based

upon the importance or required feature of an invitee. The room and the chairman will receive a higher weighting since they are required. Additional invitees can be indicated as required and given a higher rating, this would be equivalent to scoring a quorum member higher as it performs an identical function in substantially the same manner with substantially the same results. All required members would be indicated by their score value). Conmy does not explicitly teach checking for a threshold number of team members consulting. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known that a minimum or threshold or quorum of attendees is required. In order for a meeting to take place a minimum of two people would be required as indicated on page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate a minimum or quorum number of invitees to have a meeting to provide a method for determining whether a meeting could be realized.

As per claim 21, Conmy teaches setting said selection score to unusable (column 4, lines 54-55, where the availability time for each invitee is retrieved from the database and see busytime creation unit (304) and column 4, lines 56-67, where the busytime unit determines the times that each invitee is busy or the times that are unusable for that person since they are busy). Conmy does not explicitly teach responsive to identifying less than said threshold number of team members consulting. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known that a minimum or threshold or quorum of attendees is required. In order for a meeting to take place a minimum of two people

would be required as indicated on page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism

for distributed meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. Therefore it would

have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to

incorporate a minimum or quorum number of invitees to have a meeting to provide a

method for determining whether a meeting could be realized.

As per claim 22, Conmy teaches the step of identifying said solution time block

for automated meeting scheduling including at least said subset of said plurality of

selected invitees utilizing said invitee attendance type, delegates, representatives,

quorums, and teams data includes the steps of performing an approve meeting routine

for a solution time block (See column 6, lines 34-45, where the best fit option is selected

(see Figure 3)); and checking for a scheduled status responsive to performing said

approve meeting routine (column 8, lines 8-25, where the status is indicated by the

shading of the boxes.).

As per claim 23, Conmy teaches responsive to identifying said scheduled status,

of performing a finalize meeting routine (See Figure 9, where the final time is selected

based upon it being "ok for everyone").

As per claim 24, Conmy teaches responsive to not identifying said scheduled

status, of releasing blocked off time for said solution time block and marking said

solution time block as unusable (See busytime creation unit (304) and column 4, lines

56-67, where the busytime unit determines the times that each invitee is busy or the

times that are unusable for that person since they are busy.).

As per claim 25, Conmy teaches performing an approve meeting routine includes the steps for each attendee and consultant, of blocking off calendar for said solution time block and inviting each attendee and consultant (See column 6, lines 34-45, where the best fit option is selected (see Figure 3) and column 8, lines 8-25, where the status is indicated by the shading of the boxes and see Figure 3, where an invitation is sent to each invitee. A consultant is understood to perform the same function as a representative and is therefore treated as such.). Comny does not explicitly teach a representative as previously discussed in claim 1. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known to use representatives at meetings to provide means for efficiently conveying information to a group of people, whereby it is not efficient for every member of every group to attend every meeting, therefore a representative is assigned to attend and report back on the information obtained to the group. This is supported by articles such as: page 1014 of "Eliciting public values for complex policy decisions" by Keeney et al., Management Science, September 1990.

As per claim 26, Conmy teaches blocking off calendar for solution time block and inviting each attendee and consultant includes the steps blocking off calendar for said solution time block and inviting each delegate (See Figure 3 where an invitation is sent to each invitee and the invitee may send it to their delegate (column 9, lines 23-34, where a delegate may be indicated) and column 8, lines 8-25, where the status is indicated by the shading of the boxes). Comny does not explicitly teach a representative as previously discussed in claim 1. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known to use representatives at meetings to provide means for efficiently conveying information

to a group of people, whereby it is not efficient for every member of every group to

attend every meeting, therefore a representative is assigned to attend and report back

on the information obtained to the group. This is supported by articles such as: page

1014 of "Eliciting public values for complex policy decisions" by Keeney et al.,

Management Science, September 1990.

As per claim 27, Conmy teaches steps for each team of identifying a number of

team members to invite (column 3, lines29-30, where the coordinator specifies the

invitees); blocking off calendar for said solution time block and inviting said identified

number of team members (column 8, lines 8-25, where the status of when the meeting

is being held is indicated by the shading of the boxes and see Figure 3, where an

invitation is sent to each invitee).

As per claim 28, Conmy teaches performing said finalize meeting routine

includes the steps for each non-consulting attendees, of converting blocked off calendar

for said solution time block to meeting time block (column 9, lines 30-34, where once

the invite is accepted the calendar is updated with the information which would entail

blocking off the time on the calendar as busy so that another meeting is not scheduled

for that time slot.).

As per claim 29, Conmy teaches steps for each rescheduled meeting, of sending

rescheduled notices (column 9, lines 58-60, where the meeting can be rescheduled and

an invitation for the rescheduled event can be sent out.).

As per claim 41, Conmy teaches storing meeting settings and invitees data for a

meeting (See Figure 6 where the invitees and the meeting settings are listed. See also

column 3, lines 29-37); said meeting settings and invitees data including an invitee

attendance type (column 6, lines 60-67 where a required or optional attendee

constitutes an attendance type); calculating a selection score for each potential time

block for automated meeting scheduling utilizing said stored meeting settings and

invitees data including said invitee attendance type (column 6, lines 34-54, where the

system weights, which requires a scoring system, the invitees and resources for the

meeting and provides a best fit option as well as other potential options. See also fit

determination unit (308)); and setting said selection score to unusable responsive to

identifying an insufficient number of available team members (column 6, lines 46-54,

where the unavailability weighting is used to score the unavailability of an invitee and

their relative importance to the meeting. The factors are additive with the higher value

indicating the less available the time slot. See also column 7, lines 18-33, where the

system reduces the number if invitees by removing the invitee with the lowest weighting

and re-checking the time slot with these invitees until a list is found that can fit the time

interval. This is presented to the coordinator as an alternative to the best fit option. If the

members that are required for the meeting are not included in the invitee list as the end

of this reduction process, the meeting will not be able to be held. Therefore there is a

required minimum of invitees needed for the meeting which is equivalent to a quorum as

it performs an identical function in substantially the same manner with substantially the

same results); or identifying an insufficient number of available consulting team

members (column 7, lines 18-33, where the system reduces the number if invitees by

removing the invitee with the lowest weighting and re-checking the time slot with these

invitees until a list is found that can fit the time interval. This is presented to the

coordinator as an alternative to the best fit option. If the members that are required for

the meeting are not included in the invitee list as the end of this reduction process, the

meeting will not be able to be held. Therefore there is a required minimum of invitees

needed for the meeting which is equivalent to a quorum as it performs an identical

function in substantially the same manner with substantially the same results. This

would hold true whether it was a consulting member that was required or not. A

consultant is understood to perform the same function as a representative and is

therefore treated as such.); discarding each said potential time block having said

selection score set to unusable (column 7, lines 18-33, the lowest score is dropped from

the invitee list which is equivalent to it being unusable.); identifying a solution time block

for automated meeting scheduling utilizing said invitee attendance type with said

calculated selection score for each said potential time block (column 6, lines 34-54,

where the system weights, which requires a scoring system, the invitees and resources

for the meeting and provides a best fit option as well as other potential options. See also

fit determination unit (308)).

Comny does not explicitly teach the attendee categories of delegates

representatives, quorums and team data. Outlook 97 teaches that it is known to have

delegates and team data (page 117 where the workgroup member category represents

the team data category and the use of delegates is taught.). Outlook is an analogous art

as it also teaches about scheduling meetings. Therefore it would have been obvious to

one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the scheduling

system of Comny with the delegate and team data categories of Outlook 97 to provide

means for further defining the meeting and ensuring accuracy of the appropriate people

present at the meeting.

Official notice is taken that it is old and well known to use representatives at

meetings as indicated on page 1014 of "Eliciting public values for complex policy

decisions" by Keeney et al., Management Science, September 1990. Official notice is

also taken that it is old and well known for meetings to have quorums as indicated on

page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling

system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of

ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the attendee data of Comny

with the additional representative and quorum categories to provide means for further

defining the meeting and ensuring accuracy of the appropriate people and number of

people being present for the meeting.

Conclusion

7.   Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to **Jonathan Sterrett** whose telephone number is 571-

272-6881. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 10:30

am to 7:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on 571-272-6729. The fax phone number for

the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a

USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information

system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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1-24-07

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